

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

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SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSC-05

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7669

INFO ALL OAU CAPITALS 010

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE ADDIS ABABA 0332

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR PROP ET

SUBJ: EPMG ISSUES STATEMENT CRITICIZING WESTERN PRESS REPORTS,
USG AND HMG

1. EPMG DISTRIBUTED PRESS RELEASE ISSUED BY EPMG MININFO AT
OPENING OF OAU SUMMIT JAN 10 CRITICIZING "CERTAIN WESTERN PRESS
REPORTS WHICH HAD DISTORTED ETHIOPIA'S POLICY TOWAJO ANGOLA" AS WELL
AS "FOREIGN SOURCES OF THESE REPORTS". SPECIFICALLY, STATEMENT
REFERS TO STORY OF KIDNAPPING OF TWO HONG KONG CHINESE BY "BANDITS"
IN ERITREA OVER MONTH AGO SOURCED TO BRITISH EMBASSY IN ADDIS,
REPORT OF JAN 9 OF RELEASE OF TWO AMERICANS KIDNAPPED IN ERITREA
SOURCED TO STATE DEPT, AND STORY CARRIED JAN 12 ISSUE OF TIME
MAGAZINE REFERRING TO "PERSUASION TOUR" (ETHIOPIA EXCEPTED)
OF ASST SECRETARY SCHAUFLE WHICH REPORTEDLY SAYS "WASHINGTON
PERSUADED ETHIOPIA TO HOLD OFF RECOGNITION (OF MPLA) AT LEAST
UNTIL AFTER SUMMIT ON GROUND THAT AS HOST TO THE OAU, IT SHOULD
REMAIN NEUTRAL" (WE HAVE NOT YET SEEN TIME ISSUE). STATEMENT
WAS CARRIED IN TOTO IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE ETHIOPIAN HERALD MORNING
JAN 11.

2. COMPLETE TEXT OF STATEMENT FOLLOWS:

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QUOTE

"ON THE EVE OF THE EXTRAORDINARY AFRICAN SUMMIT CONFERENCE IN ADDIS ABABA, CERTAIN QUARTERS, USING THE MASS MEDIA, HAVE SHAMELESSLY MADE ATTEMPTS TO MISINTERPRET SOCIALIST ETHIOPIA'S POLICY ON THE ANGOLAN PROBLEM AND TO DISTORT THE IMAGE OF THIS REVOLUTIONARY COUNTRY ABROAD.

"THE PROVISIONAL MILITARY GOVERNMENT OF SOCIALIST ETHIOPIA HAS COME TO THIS ASSESSMENT BASED ON THREE UNRELATED MATTERS REPORTED IN THE WESTERN PRESS. ONE REFERS TO THE KIDNAPPING OF TWO HONG KONG CHINESE BY BANDITS IN THE NORTHERN ADMINISTRATIVE REGION OF ERITREA. THE SOURCE OF THE STORY REPORTED BY REUTERS NEWS AGENCY IS THE BRITISH EMBASSY PGN ADDIS ABABA AND THE REPORT ITSELF SAYS THAT THE "INCIDENT" HAD TAKEN PLACE ONE MONTH AGO. THE SECOND IS A NEWS ITEM, AGAIN REPORTED BY THE WESTERN PRESS, THAT TWO OF THE AMERICANS KIDNAPPED BY BANDITS IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE REGION OF ERITREA HAD BEEN RELEASED YESTERDAY. THE SOURCE OF THIS NEWS IS GIVEN AS THE STATE DEPARTMENT IN WASHINGTON.

"THAT THESE TWO REPORTS SHOULD HAVE BEEN GIVEN THIS MUCH PULICITY BY THE ACKNOWLEDGED SOURCES ON THE EVE OF THE SUMMIT CONFERENCE SMACKS OF A DELIBERATE ATTEMPT AT SMEAR CAMPAIGN BY THE SOURCES AND THE WESTERN MASS MEDIA. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TIMING OF THOSE REPORTS CAN BE UNDERSTOOD IF ONE READS THE REDICULOUS REFERENCE TO ETHIOPIA'S POLICY TOWARDS ANGOLA, AS REPORTED IN THE JANUARY 12 ISSUE OF THE TIME MAGAZINE. THE TIME SPECIAL REPORT ON ANGOLA, INTER ALIA, SURVEYS THE PERSUASION TOUR OF FIVE AFRICAN COUNTRIES, ETHIOPIA EXCLUDED, BY AMERICAN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR AFRICAN AFFAIRS WILLIAM SCHAUFLE AND SAYS: "WASHINGTON PERSUADED ETHIOPIA TO HOLD OFF RECOGNITION AT LEAST UNTIL AFTER THE SUMMIT ON THE GROUND THAT AS HOST TO THE OAU IT SHOULD REMAIN NEUTRAL." THIS IS NOT ONLY A FABRICATION BUT A FALSIFICATION OF KNOWN FACTS AND A DELIBERATE MISINTERPRETATION OF ETHIOPIA'S POLICY TOWARDS ANGOLA,

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WHICH HAS BEEN REPEATEDLY MADE KNOWN TO THE WORLD. ETHIOPIA WILL NOT TAKE DICTATION FROM ANY QUARTERS WHATSOEVER ON WHAT POLICY ETHIOPIA SHOULD PURSUE NOT ONLY ON ANGOLA BUT ON ANY FOREIGN OR DOMESTIC MATTERS. FOR ANY QUARTERS TO ASSUME THAT THE REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT OF SOCIALIST ETHIOPIA COULD BE PERSUADED OR PRESSURISED TO ACCEPT DICTATION FROM ABROAD IS TO ENTERTAIN NIGHTMARES. NOT ONLY ETHIOPIA BUT NO SELF-RESPECTING SOVERIGN

GOVERNMENT CAN TOLERATE SUCH INSINUATIONS. IT WAS ETHIOPIA'S POLICY, CHOSEN OUT OF HER OWN FREE WILL, TO WITHHOLD DECISION, AFTER THE OAU SECRETARIAT HAD INFORMED ETHIOPIA THAT THE SUMMIT WOULD BE HELD IN ADDIS ABABA, THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE OAU. ETHIOPIA'S POLICY OF WITHHOLDING DECISION WAS TAKEN OUT OF CONSIDERATION TO THE HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT OF THE OAU AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH HER OWN FOREIGN POLICY FORMULATED AT HOME DEVOID OF ANY FOREIGN INFLUENCE AND IN KEEPING WITH THE SPIRIT OF AFRICAN UNITY.

"IT IS HIGHLY REGRETTABLE THAT CERTAIN QUARTERS SHOULD SEEK THE ASSISTANCE OF SOME JOURNALISTS, WHO HAVE NO FUNDAMENTAL KNOWLEDGE OF ETHIOPIA'S BASIC POLICIES, IN A VAIN ATTEMPT TO TARNISH THE GOOD IMAGE OF ETHIOPIA ABROAD BY CALCULATED MANEUVERS THE TIMING OF WHICH BESPEAKS OF THEIR OBJECTIVES AND HARDLY NEED CONDEMNATION".

END QUOTE

3. COMMENT BY SEPTTEL. RE HONG KONG CHINESE WHOSE KIDNAPPING HAD NOT PREVIOUSLY BEEN PICKED UP BY MEDIA, UK EMB HERE HAD TOLD US STORY WOULD BREAK AS RESULT INQUIRY TO REUTERS IN UK SOURCED TO HONG KONG. REUTERS IN TURN QUERIED BRITISH EMB WHO REPORTEDLY CONFIRMED KIDNAPPING, BUT RESTRICTED INFO AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE. HUMMEL

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